

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 11, 2007. Claims 1 to 38 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1 to 11, 20, 21, 23, 24, 30 to 32, 35 and 36 are withdrawn. Of the claims under consideration, Claims 26, 33, 34 and newly-added Claims 37 and 38 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 12 to 19, 22, 25 to 29, 33 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,815,764 (Tomory). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 26 is directed to an image recording apparatus which can connect with a sheet processing apparatus having plural storage units capable of storing sheets. The apparatus includes reception means for receiving data including image data from a remote data processing apparatus; image recording means for recording an image based on the received image data, on a sheet; and control means for performing control, according to first data instructing to distribute the sheets to the storage unit belonging to which of plural groups of the grouped storage units is included in the data received from the remote data processing apparatus, to distribute the sheets on which the image data from the remote data processing apparatus has been recorded to the storage unit belonging to the group according to the first data. The control means causes the image recording apparatus to execute more than once the recording of the same page of image data of a second-type job and causes the image recording apparatus to distribute a record result obtained by the recording to plural storage units of the sheet processing apparatus, in a case where the

second-type job is accepted by the image recording apparatus from a first-type job in which the first data is not set and the second-type job in which the first data is set. The first data is group-name information commonly utilized by the plural storage units. The control means causes the image recording apparatus to execute the recording of the same page of the image data of the second-type job by the number of times corresponding to the number of members specified by the group-name information included in the second-type job, and causes to distribute the same recording result obtained by the recording to the plural storage units allocated to the plural members specified by the group-name information included in the second-type job. An arbitrary character string based on an operator's manual input using a user interface unit can previously be registered as the group-name information.

In contrast, Tomory merely discloses routing prints of a copy job developed on a digital copier to an alternate output destination or bin when the copier is busy processing a print job, (column 15, lines 57 to 67 and column 16, lines 34 to 37 of Tomory). Tomory suggests that a security level such as "private", "semi-public" or "public" can be set with respect to each bin. However, by relying on such static information, that is the states of "private/semi-public/public", an operator cannot register operator desired information. Also, usability of such static information is poor as only a few discrete values are allowed for distinguishing the output bins.

In addition, even if an input/display area 244-4 shown in Fig. 9 is considered, Tomory causes a problem that, to output recording papers to plural bins respectively, an operator has to designate a certain bin number every time the recording papers are output to the corresponding bin.

Accordingly, even if an operator were to try and direct output to multiple bins using a system in accordance with Tomory, the operator will be frustrated by the complicated operations demanded of the operator.

On the other hand, a data processing apparatus in accordance with Claim 26 distributes sheets on which image data from a remote data processing apparatus has been recorded to a storage unit belonging to a group according to group-name information commonly utilized by plural storage units, wherein an arbitrary character string based on an operator's manual input using a user interface unit can previously be registered as the group-name information. Therefore, the usability of the data processing apparatus is improved over a system in accordance with Tomory.

In light of the deficiencies of Tomory as discussed above, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 26 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Amended independent Claims 33, 34, 37 and 38 are directed to a method, a computer-readable medium, a system and a system, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 26. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 33, 34, 37 and 38 are also now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Finally, the previous claim count totaled 36 with 10 independent claims. The present amendment adds two independent claims, bringing the total claim count to 38 with 12 independent claims. Therefore, the fee difference between the previous claim count and the current claim count is two additional claims (\$100.00) with two additional independent claims (\$400.00). Accordingly, the Director is hereby authorized to charge \$500.00 for additional claims to Deposit Account 50-3939.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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